



THE CHURCH OF THE  
**ADVENT**

**Read:** John 1:14-18 and 1 Corinthians 11:23-32

**Summary:** This Sunday we began a new series entitled “This Is My Body.” Over the next six weeks we will focus on the meaning and role our physical bodies play in our human identity and calling. Pastor Tommy began this week by looking at four different ways we can understand the phrase “This Is My Body.”

Many read this phrase as a highly personal statement that emphasizes our complicated relationship with our unique body (“THIS is my body”) or as a political statement that views our bodies as battlegrounds in society’s struggle to organize power and define freedom (“this is MY body”). These personal and political uses of the phrase “This Is My Body” fundamentally denigrate our embodiment and see our bodies as a problem to be solved.

The Gospel offers an alternative: the redemption of our bodies through Jesus Christ. John 1:14 states that the eternal Word of God – the one through whom the universe was created – became embodied as a flesh and blood human. In the Incarnation of Jesus Christ God says to us “this is my BODY” and reveals what it means to be truly human. Jesus eventually sacrificed his body on the Cross and gave us his sacramental body in bread and wine as means of being united with his risen life, saying “this IS my body” (1 Cor. 11:23).

- Questions:**
1. Prayerfully reflect on the ways that you personally have struggled with shame, confusion, frustration, despair, etc. as a result of your body. How do you need the Gospel to speak into these parts of your life? Share with one another if you feel comfortable doing so.
  2. How does our political discourse describe, instrumentalize, or idolize the body? What implicit beliefs about embodiment underlie these conversations?
  3. How should the Incarnation fundamentally reorient how we understand our embodiment? Consider the ways Jesus offers us compassion and direction through his Incarnation.
  4. Jesus pours out his body and blood on the Cross and in the bread and wine of the Eucharist. How does this sacramental participation in Christ’s body give us a glimpse of our risen life in the new heavens and new earth?

5. How can we begin to receive our bodies as a gift from God? What personal and/or communal practices would help us to celebrate the goodness of our embodied life?

**Prayer:** Pray that God would bring to light the complicated relationships we have with our bodies and the ways that we implicitly denigrate our embodied life. Pray that God would heal our shame and enlighten the eyes of our heart to see our bodies as a gift.

**Do:** Pay attention to the ways we talk about bodies throughout your week, either implicitly or explicitly. Try to discern where these beliefs about our bodies come from; how these beliefs align with the Gospel and Christ's embodied life; and how these beliefs manifest themselves in our everyday lives. Bring these reflections into discussion with a friend/core group and the sermons over the next six weeks.